

we are approaching the 40th anniversary of the first landing on another celestial body by human beings. A number of our colleagues have joined me to honor two major firsts from the early days of America's space program.

One of those firsts is the lunar landing. We have introduced legislation to bestow the distinguished Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award given by Congress, on the crew of Apollo 11. Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were the first and second humans to set a footprint on the Moon, while command module pilot Mike Collins orbited above.

In this legislation, which we have termed the "New Frontier Congressional Gold Medal," we also honor the first American who orbited the Earth, Senator John Glenn.

Today at 87 years old, John Glenn is retired from the Senate. He lives in his home State of Ohio. He retains his home in the Washington, DC, area. We get a chance to see John from time to time as he comes back and joins his colleagues on the floor of the Senate.

These are pioneers. They are firsts—Glenn first to orbit the Earth as an American. Remember, we got surprised by the Soviets. They launched Yuri Gagarin for one orbit, and we did not even have a rocket with strong enough thrust to get into orbit.

Shortly after Gagarin, we put Alan Shepard up only into suborbit, followed by another suborbital mission with Gus Grissom. Ten months after Gagarin—and by this time the Soviets had flown a second cosmonaut, Titof, and he had orbited several times—10 months after that fateful first human flight, we took a chance. We took that Mercury capsule that John Glenn climbed into—indeed, he had to shoehorn in to get into it, it was so small—put it on top of an Atlas rocket that we knew had a 20-percent chance of failure, and the rest is history.

Of course, we remember that story. There was an indication that John's heat shield was loose which, had it been, he would have burned up on reentry. The last radio communication we had as he entered that blackout period coming through heat 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit at reentry that creates a blackout situation for radio frequency, the last thing we heard from John Glenn before he went into that blackout period was he was humming the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Oh, what words those were when suddenly we heard: "Houston, this is Friendship 7." We knew he was alive.

He paved the way for that extraordinary message back to Earth from Neil Armstrong in which he said:

This is one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind.

This past weekend, I had the occasion to join with a number of our American astronauts on the induction of three more space explorers into the Astronaut Hall of Fame. The inductees were space shuttle veterans—Pinky Nelson, Bill Shepherd, and Jim

Wetherbee. They joined the elite ranks of 70 other legendary astronauts, who already include John Glenn, Armstrong, Aldrin, and Collins.

I went to this particular ceremony because I had the privilege of being a crew mate of Pinky's, and Bill Shepherd, otherwise shown as "Shep," was the rookie astronaut who actually strapped us in before launch.

While I was there meeting with and seeing these three new astronauts honored by induction into the Hall of Fame, I thought about the amazing achievements we have made, how strong leadership and bold vision has changed not the space program but all our lives. I think about the true American character of exploration, whether it is the space program or exploration into the inner workings of the mind, the functions of the body, exploration into the climate of this planet, exploration of how we cope each day with all the problems we are facing, our space program being one part of our exploration which did not start just recently. We are a nation of explorers.

We did not just start with exploration. This started way back in our history. We had a frontier then. It was westward. Now that frontier is in so many other areas, including space.

The space program has given us much to improve life on Earth, from fire-resistant material to weather forecasting equipment, to scratch-resistant lenses, to new kinds of laser surgery. It has also given us selfless heroes who put their lives on the line for the benefit of all the rest of us and for the generations to come.

It was Armstrong who made that first step out onto the lunar dust. It was Glenn who paved the way for the rest of Mercury and Gemini and Apollo. It is hard to believe that all these things happened after President Kennedy presented a bold challenge before a joint session of the Congress in which he said: We are going to send a man to the Moon and return him safely to Earth by the end of the decade, and that was within a span of only 9 years.

The space program became the focal point of the Nation coming together. It inspired a generation of kids to get excited about science, math, technology, and engineering. We have seen that generation fulfill President Kennedy's promise, which was science and education have greatly enriched a new knowledge of ourselves, of our universe, and our environment. Life on Earth has improved by leaps and bounds from all the spinoffs from the space program.

Simply put: We all reap the harvest of gains because of exploration and the pioneering endeavors of brave Americans, such as these whom we honor with this gold medal, the highest congressional honor. They deserve this honor because of their significant contributions to planet Earth.

I ask our colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution. There will be ample opportunity for cosponsor-

ships, in addition to those of us who have submitted the resolution.

I yield the floor. I do not have to suggest the absence of a quorum because the great Senator from the State of Delaware is here, and I want him to know what a delight and pleasure he is to serve with.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I wish to say it is an honor serving with Senator NELSON. I also commend him for his tribute to Senator Glenn and the astronauts. As usual, he is right on point. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 25 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, today marks the beginning of Public Service Recognition Week. This is a time to recognize the hard-working and devoted men and women who serve in our Federal, State, county, and municipal governments.

I wish to make particular mention of the several programs taking place throughout the week in celebration of our civil servants and their contributions. I know the Partnership for Public Service, an organization with a mission to highlight our finest Government workers and promote public service, will be marking the week by awarding their annual Service to America medals. I congratulate the medal finalists and thank them for their excellence in service to our Nation.

This is an appropriate occasion to address the subject which is so relevant to the way we face the challenges before us as a nation. These challenges have shaken the public's confidence in our financial markets, in our economy, and in our Government. We must work to restore the public's confidence.

So many of the solutions being presented from the rising cost of health care to the multiple threats from overseas, to the mortgage crisis, rely primarily on the work of dedicated and dependable civil servants. The Federal employees who work day in and day out to better our country, often at great private sacrifice, deserve our public's confidence, and that is what this speech will be all about.

In the post-9/11 era of insecurity and following years of political indecision

and divisive partisanship, we are left with an abundance of problems. Our honored veterans complain of diminishing benefits, while the young decry the increases in the cost of education. America's health care system is outdated and leaves millions uninsured. We remain painfully addicted to foreign oil, and auto manufacturers require more public funds to stay afloat. Some of our challenges rise to a level unseen in decades.

Of course, whenever Americans face difficulty, we display that greatest trait of our nature. Service to the common good has been our answer to every hardship since even before the birth of our Republic. One would be hard-pressed to find any public figure of note who does not highly invoke the praise of community service and voluntarism.

Indeed, in every neighborhood in all 50 States, one can find our citizens extending their hands in help to their fellow Americans and to the unfortunate throughout the world. Likewise, no one can refrain from honoring the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform. Their dedication and diligence ensure our safe borders and sustain our liberty. The hard work of our servicemembers is rightly congratulated.

But, Mr. President, there are those who give so much of themselves and often so many years of their lives, yet receive hardly any share of recognition. In the recent past, the disparagement of our Federal employees—the greatest civil servants in the history of our republican government—has become sadly commonplace. Diminishing their contribution to this Nation is an all-too-frequent exercise.

Federal employees deserve praise for the vital roles they play each day enforcing the laws we pass in this very Chamber. They care for our veterans. They toil in laboratories to create new energy technologies. Our Federal workers safely manage the complex networks of flights crossing our skies day and night. They deliver our mail, regulate fair housing practices, and conduct our diplomacy abroad. They serve in all three branches of Government.

They are, in many ways, silent sentinels of our Nation's well-being.

Indeed, Federal employees have become indispensable to our national life. With a generation of Federal employees nearing retirement, we need to attract our most talented citizens back to public service. Good, honest, responsible government requires the best civil servants.

Throughout our history, great men and women answered the call to serve in the Federal Government—citizens from all walks of life and from every corner of America. There are those who dedicate their entire careers to public service, but there are also so many Americans who enter Federal employment for just a short period. Even the novelist William Faulkner worked part-time as a postmaster when he was a young man.

The nature of our Federal workers today is the same as it was when the French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville visited in the early 19th century. He observed that:

Public officers in the United States are commingled with a crowd of citizens; they have neither palaces nor guards, nor ceremonial costumes. This simple exterior of the persons in authority is connected not only with the peculiarities of the American character, but with the fundamental principles of that society.

I, too, was a Federal employee when I worked for 22 years with then-Senator JOE BIDEN, and I can attest as much as anyone that to serve entails responsibility and dedication. During my years in Government work, including 13 years as a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, I met so many hardworking, well-qualified, and devoted public servants, most of whom will not be recognized individually by the public for their important contributions.

The American people collectively put their faith in all who work in Government, from those elected to the highest offices, to those, like Faulkner, working part-time for an hourly wage. Our esteemed predecessor in this House, Henry Clay of Kentucky, once declared:

Government is a trust, and the officers of the government are trustees; and both the trust and the trustees are created for the benefit of the people.

Senator Clay could not have been more correct. Those who serve the Republic carry the heavy responsibility of not working for the benefit of themselves alone but for the good of all.

What should be a source of pride to those who enter employment in the Federal Government has become, all too often, a thankless job. Serving in the Federal Government can be an enriching experience, and we need to do more to promote civil service among young people. I am encouraged that there is a growing desire now, unlike in the past several years, among our best and brightest students to seek Federal jobs.

For so long, the allure of easy wealth on Wall Street and scorn for Government work led our young graduates to overlook positions in civil service. But it should not take a recession and a popular new administration to attract this talent. Our young people are eager to take on responsibility, to prove themselves worthy of others' trust. They want to have a part in what President Obama has called "repairing the world." With more recognition of our Federal workforce and praise for its important contribution, there is no reason we cannot convince these young, idealistic Americans to seek in Government what they so desire—a role in history, a chance to shape their world.

The recent decision by Kal Penn, the young Hollywood star, to accept a position working in the administration advances this effort significantly. Despite a lucrative career in film and on tele-

vision, Penn—a second-generation American whose parents are immigrants from Mumbai—announced he would take a couple of years off from acting to serve his country in the Federal Government. When asked about his motives, he said:

It's probably because of the value system my grandparents instilled in me. There's not a lot of financial reward in these jobs. But, obviously, the opportunity to serve in a capacity like this is an incredible honor.

Mr. President, when I was young, it used to be that this honor which Penn speaks of drew young people by the thousands to careers in our civil service. A job in Government was a mark of distinction. It was a privilege to be able to work for the betterment of the American people. However, in recent years, that honor has been eroded by the misconception that our civil service is growing beyond measure and consists of those in Washington who are out of touch with ordinary Americans. But I say this characterization is completely untrue.

The number of Federal employees today has not grown significantly larger than its size in the 1960s. In fact, 85 percent of all Federal employees live and work outside of Washington. They are ordinary Americans, yet they perform extraordinary work.

As De Tocqueville observed more than 150 years ago, the qualities embodied by our civil servants reflect the greatest values we hold dear as Americans. Federal employees display exemplary citizenship, choosing of their own accord to pursue careers that not only provide for their families but benefit the Nation as a whole. This is despite the advantages to private sector employment. Our civil servants are industrious. They work hard, tackle difficult problems affecting millions of their fellow citizens, and do so with grace and humility.

They often need to take risks, not only to make new discoveries in science and engineering or to represent us in unsafe corners of the world, but also to expose unnecessary waste and corruption where it may arise. The history of our civil service is filled with those who choose to uphold the public trust even when at a danger to their own lives and careers. Their work requires great perseverance, and results may take longer than their tenure in office. It requires great care and attention to detail. When the public's faith is bestowed upon you, there can be no halfhearted effort. Most of all, employees in our Federal Government display an unbelievable level of modesty.

You may wonder why I go on about the virtues of our public servants when there are so many pressing matters to be considered by this body. I return, however, to my first point—that no matter what programs we launch to get America back on the right path, they will be carried out by our Federal workers.

Exemplary cases abound, but I want to highlight a few individuals in particular who embody these values and

reflect the excellence of our civil service as a whole. They have each been selected by a blue ribbon panel which includes Senator SUSAN COLLINS, in concert with Partnership for Public Service, to receive a Service to America medal.

When she began her job as Director of the Office of Public Housing Programs in 2002, Nicole Faison inherited a HUD rental system program rated for 13 years as a "high risk" program by the Government Accountability Office due to rampant waste, fraud, and abuse. Today, it is recognized for helping more low-income families receive housing assistance without wasting resources. Under Nicole's guidance, the program eliminated over \$2 billion in fraudulent payments and earned praise for its streamlined operations.

Since 9/11, there has been much attention on the security of cargo containers entering our country from overseas. Leading the charge to secure our ports, Tracy Mustin serves as Director of the Department of Energy's office of Second Line of Defense. Under Tracy's leadership, her office has installed monitoring devices at more than 100 airports, seaports, and border crossings in over 40 countries which help detect and prevent the trafficking of nuclear or radiological substances. She also oversees the Megaports Initiative, which screens and monitors cargo entering major seaports around the world. In addition to her responsibilities as a civil servant, Tracy is commissioned as a captain in the Navy Reserve.

While Tracy and her team have been fortifying our Nation's second line of defense against terrorism, brave men and women in the Armed Forces remain overseas fighting on the first line of defense. When our wounded warriors return home, they can thank the dedicated civilian employees of our Defense Department for significant advancements in the treatment and care they will receive for their injuries.

Dave Carballeyra, the Air Force's Director of Stereolithography, introduced a new 3-D technology for bone and tissue imaging which has improved treatment and rehabilitation care for wounded veterans. In particular, his work has helped soldiers suffering from severe burns from bombings in Iraq and Afghanistan and those requiring surgery to attach prosthetic devices. These advances have significantly improved their quality of life. Believe it or not, Dave is only 25 years of age.

Another public servant whom I very much want to mention is Dr. Rajiv Jain. Each year it is estimated that 2 million patients develop infections while in U.S. hospitals for routine procedures. One hundred thousand of these patients die as a result, and the elderly and newborn are particularly susceptible. Rajiv and his team at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Pittsburgh are at the forefront of an effort to reduce these infections. The infection rate at their VA facility has already

dropped 60 percent, and the strategy developed by Rajiv to prevent infections has now been adopted by all 153 VA hospitals.

When asked about his work, he commonly explains that "one infection is too many."

The final person I will mention, who works for the Department of Energy, has proven wrong those who are convinced that Government can't do something right. At the end of the Cold War, when the former Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant near Denver was designated as a Superfund site, it was estimated that it would take 70 years and nearly \$40 billion to clean it up. Many advocated a permanent quarantine of the site, arguing that its rehabilitation was not worth the cost. Frazer Lockhart took charge of the cleanup effort in 1995 and finished the job in 10 years, spending only \$7 billion. Today, 95 percent of the original site has been delisted from the Superfund and been set aside as a 6,200-acre wildlife refuge. Frazer's sound management and perseverance led to the cleanup 60 years ahead of schedule and \$30 billion under budget.

Mr. President, these stories are just a few of the countless many. Indeed, there are a great number of exceptional Federal employees, and I hope to continue sharing their stories before the Senate and honoring their service over the coming weeks and months, beginning with this group. I invite my fellow Senators to join me on those or other occasions in doing the same. These men and women daily carry out the work of developing new technologies, protecting our free markets, ensuring a cleaner environment, and advancing our interests around the world.

I believe the Founders foresaw the need for a vibrant and effective civil service and that they would be proud of the Federal employees serving today. When the first Congress convened in New York on March 4, 1789, its first matter of business was to fulfill an obligation set to it by the Constitution. Article VI declares that all public officers are to be bound by an oath or affirmation to support the Constitution, but the document leaves up to Congress to decide on the form.

The first piece of legislation ever to be passed by the United States Congress and signed into law by President Washington codified this simple but poignant oath:

I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support the Constitution of the United States.

In the years since, it has been expanded to the oath presently taken by all of us who serve in this Chamber and in the House of Representatives and by every Federal employee. But the underlying point remains unchanged from that original oath. What the Founders intended in their first act of Government, and what we now reaffirm with each taking of our modern oath, is that everyone who serves in our Government is not only obligated to support

the Constitution but also entrusted with that responsibility. That trust—the same as was noted by Clay—is the foundation of our civil service. It is the guiding principle of our Federal workers and the reason they deserve the public's confidence.

Careers in Government, we know, frequently pay far less than comparable careers in the private sector, and many times our Federal employees are asked to move across the country or overseas to perform their duties. Many serve for 20 years or more, leaving a lasting impact on communities and on our national policies without special recognition. They never see bonuses like those paid on Wall Street or elsewhere in the private sector. However, after many years of service, when our civil servants retire, they can look back on their careers and know with certainty that when their country needed them, they gave of themselves. They gave to our Nation, and they know their contribution, even if little recognized, has been genuine and significant. This is their bonus, the satisfaction and the knowledge that they have answered the call to duty, that their lives have surely served a meaningful purpose.

Again, please let it be noted that the first week of May each year is Public Service Recognition Week, and it is with great pride that I honor the service and sacrifice of our Federal employees. I thank them, and I urge my colleagues to join me this week and in future weeks to thank them for their continued work in support of our recovery during this challenging time.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAUFMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

HELPING FAMILIES SAVE THEIR HOMES ACT OF 2009

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 896, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 896) to prevent mortgage foreclosures and enhance mortgage credit availability.

Pending:

Dodd/Shelby amendment No. 1018, in the nature of a substitute.

Corker amendment No. 1019 (to amendment No. 1018), to address safe harbor for certain servicers.